

Veterans will get help from VA officials, local colleges in applying for new education loan programs for post-9/11 veterans

Northport, NY— Wednesday, Congressman Steve Israel (D-Huntington) hosted a workshop to help Long Island veterans take advantage of new federal benefits for those who served since the 9/11 attacks. The Post-9/11 GI Bill provides new benefits to those who served at least three months on active duty since September 11, 2001, including activated reservists and National Guard. The new benefits were made available to an estimated 2.1 million veterans starting in August of 2009 and many veterans are unaware of the benefits available and how to take advantage of them.

“The original GI bill was a huge success, benefiting both veterans and their communities,” Rep. Israel said. “The benefits offered by the post-9/11 GI Bill are just as significant. In addition to having served their country, veterans are coming home with leadership, skills and expertise. A good education provides will harness those capacities, helping the veterans, their families and the communities they are a part of.”

In addition to the direct benefits for veterans, Congressman Israel drafted legislation, included in the Post-9/11 GI Bill, that allows military service personnel to transfer unused GI Bill education benefits to their spouses or children. Rep. Israel drafted the bi-partisan legislation in 2008 and worked successfully to include it in the broader Post-9/11 GI Bill.

The Post-9/11 GI Bill was signed into law in June 2008 and took effect last year. It provides four-year college scholarships for Iraq and Afghanistan veterans, similar to the benefits provided to World War II vets. The original GI bill of 1944 is credited with helping millions of veterans achieve the American dream, giving them access to education, and helping launch an era of great economic prosperity for the country as million so veterans contributed to the economy. It made a free college education available to more than 15 million war veterans after World War II. The original GI bill paid the full cost of tuition at any public or private college or university, including room, board, books, and a living stipend. Experts estimate the bill returned \$7 to the economy for every \$1 it cost.

The Post-9/11 GI Bill covers educational charges up to the cost of the most expensive in-state public school – covering 100 percent of tuition, fees and books. The bill also provides a monthly stipend equivalent to housing costs in their area. Veterans who have served at least 90 days of active duty service after September 10, 2001, and received an honorable discharge will qualify for the Post-9/11 GI Bill. To qualify for the full benefit a veteran must have served at least three years of active duty service after September 10, 2001. Active duty veterans serving more than 90 days, but less than three years of post-9/11 active duty service, are eligible for a percentage of the full Post-9/11 GI Bill.

More information on the benefits available to Veterans is available on Congressman Israel's website, at <http://Israel.House.gov> or the VA's website at: <http://www.gibill.va.gov/>.